

Testimony before the State of Connecticut Appropriations Committee

Public Hearing, February 18, 2010

Community Support

For the record, my name is Thomas Cushman, I reside in Simsbury and I am a human being that experiences Bi-Polar Disorder. Hello Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee. I am here to testify on behalf of community support agencies. In April of 2006, shortly after becoming a member of Prime Time House, I started massage school. I felt that I was well enough that I did not need to utilize the support of my staff advocate and educational support advisor, Mary Baker, and the support of the Clubhouse in general. I fell on my face, took a leave of absence and went back to Prime Time House after finding out I had been withdrawn. Upon returning for help, Mary asked me what I wanted to do. I told her I still wanted to be a LMT but was not sure I meant it. My wife and parents were beside themselves. When things get this bad, sometimes it is too close for family to help and someone like Mary takes some of the load off. I went through four tough months of writing the appeal letter and handed it in at the beginning of 2008. By May I heard nothing and with nudging from Mary and Prime Time House, I went to another school in June of 2008 and to my dismay, upon telling admissions my experience at the other school, I was enrolled. The course load was two classes for 5 weeks in 9 modules with three weeks off. Four days a week 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with a boat load of studying if I wanted to be good. I started with 8 other students. Two of us graduated. I could not make it to Prime Time House much but when I could or made calls after getting A's on my exams and practicums, the response I got was amazing. This pile of books is an indication of what I had to study in a short amount of time. On August 7 of 2009, I sat for the

National Certification Exam for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. I had 3 hours to take the exam and submitted it an hour and a half in. I waited for the pass or fail message for about thirty seconds and then I started to cry. In October I got this in the mail. It is my Massage Therapist License No. 006054. As far as the school knows, I am the only one from my class that got the license. In no small measure, I have Mary Baker and Prime Time House to thank for that. As always, I am honored to speak here and will be happy to answer any questions.